



Photo History



From DECEMBER 2022 (Volume 132)





Photo History



Cover Picture

From December 2022

Strange, but true.

Invariably when we meet up with contemporaries, be it on a walk or socially, the conversation rapidly contains the words "do you remember...?"

I guess this is true of every generation but I feel that there have been far more changes in society, in developments and in every aspect of life during our lives.

Yes, we have spanned close on 80 years (78 to date) so I guess, in the scheme of things, we must expect things to change.

However, it is the speed of change and also, in many cases we question whether the changes are really for the better.

Anyway, this prompted Lynn and myself to brainstorm and note down many of these changes...and we are sure that once we have noted them down, many more will pop into our heads

We are sure they will make fascinating reading to younger people and as sometimes we were not aware that certain things just '*aren't around any more*' we felt it would be a great project.

I will start with random memories, not in a chronological manner and not dated because one train of thought reminds me of another...

We hope you will find this of interest



Our Enfield United Dairies milkman, Joe, had a horse-drawn float pulled by Soldier. At our house he undid Soldier's hay bag and Joe walked up Borden Avenue to where Neil Ashman, my friend, lived and Soldier slowly chewed his way along the grass verges up to Neil's house where Joe and Soldier re-united and continued on their way.

Mrs Shelton, who lived opposite our house, welcomed Soldier with open arms (and a bucket and trowel)...for his addition to the street scene.



She swore blind that her enormous rhubarb was thanks to Soldier.

Another street regular was the rag and bone man sitting up on his horse and cart ringing his bell and shouting, what sounded like a foreign sentence... 'raboneanlummer'. When we were older we understood he was actually shouting '*rag, bone and lumber*'.



Another, less frequent visitor was the fizzy drink seller. I can't remember what they were called.



This was possibly 10 years after the end of the war and the last of rationing was now welcomed. Air raid warning sirens were still heard and apparently they were not decommissioned until 1993

Through traffic in our suburban road was rare and the local dads came out and played cricket in the street with all the kids. Image that now with cars parked all along the street



Neil and I were regular roller skaters and we had metal-wheeled skates which could probably be heard from miles away and we coveted the rubber-wheeled ones that were slowly becoming available. On snowy days we all had snowball fights in the street and Neil and I built a small ramp on the pavement which we jumped off at, what seemed like, breakneck speed..



After an unusually warm late November, the weather suddenly changed early December and a really cold frosty day gave many fascinating images locally



Photo History

An alley ran past the back of our house and a local headmaster, Mr Bone, if he saw me waiting on the corner, allowed me to drive his car to his garage behind his house. He was a really great guy and even made stilts for Neil and myself. Never a thought about avoiding an older man. He was just a special fellow. In fact, years later, when he died, I went to his house and told his son and daughter in law how we missed him.



Talking about cars reminds me..(there I go!) of my driving lessons in a Morris Minor. Despite having indicators we were obliged to open the driving window and give clear and decisive hand signals. That car is now probably worth a lot know, I'm sure.



May 1957



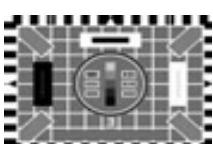
I had an old bike which was gladly exchanged for my pride and joy—a birthday present of a Hercules Harlequin with derailleur gears. I cycled daily to Latymer School and left it in the bike sheds there (Do bike sheds still exist?) I managed to acquire an alloy racing bike frame and had it assembled at Palmers Green into a lightweight drop-handlebar racing bike that was great ..with the exception of the racing saddle which was torture on my skinny bum.



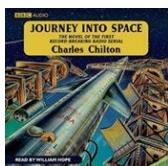
We cycled a lot and even cycled to Southend once...HillyFields was a favourite and we climbed the high viaduct and put pennies (old ones) on the line and then hid in the protection recesses until the trains had passed hunting avidly for our flattened and distorted pennies which became valued possessions. Mum would have had kittens if she'd known what we were doing. We also went 'scrumping' a lot and childhood memories of where the best plum trees and apple trees were situated was installed in our knowledge banks.



Every Sunday, Neil and I got out the Duraglit chrome polish and shone our bikes with pride. His Dad commandeered us to wash and polish his car. I seem to remember he was fastidious with his inspection after our work areas. No, we did not get paid for familiar call from Billy Cotton "Wakey Wakey " was tainment, tv was in its infancy. Hard to believe but hours. Television was broadcast up to the outbreak summed subsequently in June 1946. In the early only one channel - the BBC. Televisions took time to programme the indoor aerial had to be moved around to find the best reception. One of the most popular of the early programmes was the panel game - "What's my Line". A test card appeared allowing one to check the picture quality and the programmes were very short duration with nothing during the night etc.



On Wednesday nights the whole family sat round our large valve radio listening to the cockney tone of Alfie Bass in Journey Into Space. The first series was first broadcast in 1953–1954 on the BBC Light programme. Some interesting facts are: The series was originally intended to have 12 episodes and 5.1 million people tuned into the first episode, but the first four episodes (which took place on Earth) did not prove very popular, and the audience soon shrank to fewer than 4 million.. But once the rocket set off for the Moon in episode 5, the audience reaction was much more favourable. The series was extended to 18 episodes, and by the time the final episode was broadcast, 8 million people were tuning in.



One of the most watched events on television in the early 50s was the Queen's Coronation in 1953, narrated by Richard Dimbleby. Many people watched the event on a friend's set and we went to Marion's house to watch it. I remember very quickly being bored and going out to play after a short while. Some tv's had a thick magnifying double screen front of the main screen supposedly to enlarge the image. I even remember a tinted screen with a blue top and green bottom to give the impression of colour tv (which was still a thing of the future). In fact, I am reminded by Lynn that I swore that I was happy with black and white and would certainly never get a colour set..



Photo History



"Hey lads...get me 10 Seniors from the shops please"



I remember Jean ...a gorgeous much older girl, who lived in a house backing onto the alley at the bend. I always made sure I checked out her garden when I cycled past. ...guess I was a precocious lad.. Neil's mum was a heavy smoker but her trips to buy 'fags' were not frequent as everyday she got us to go to the local shops for her 10 Seniors. Every shop on our parade seemed to have been there for ever and I can still see them in front of me. Mellows the chemist with those giant bottles of coloured liquid in the window. The paper shop where mum bought me Beano and Dandy and Eagle comics and those books where magic pictures appeared when you rubbed a pencil over the page. I had Boy's Own delivered monthly. The post office was at the back.. Jones, the sweet shop is amazingly still called Jones and we rifled through boxes of assorted liquorice sorting out our favourite pipes and boot laces etc. No such thing as health and hygiene. Part of the attraction was finding your favourite before many other sticky fingers had handled them. Gob stoppers were 1d each and changed colours as you sucked them (must have done wonders for adolescent teeth) Jacks were 4 a penny. Sherbet dabs and Waggon wheels were favourites and we bought liquorice root to chew. Frozen Jubblies were a triangular card container which they put in the freezer and lasted for ages...even if the juice became a lump of ice after a while.



Liquorice assort-ment.- wow!



Boy's Own paper



Black Jacks & Fruit Salad - 4 a penny



Slithering live eels



Mellows Chemists
on the parade



Frozen Jubblies



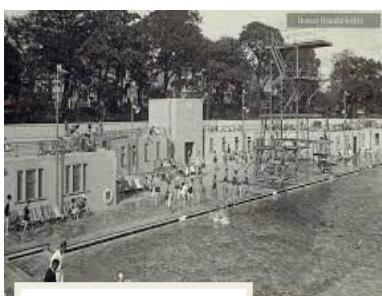
Sherbert Dabs



Wagon Wheels



Liquorice root



Barrowell Green

As now, I loved swimming and spent days of the long, long summer holiday at Barrowell Green (now a council tip) or Enfield Lido (now a Multi cinema complex) or Durnsford Road,,now a garden centre) Sometimes Mum and Dad drove us to Hertford Watersplash which was a great treat.

Edmonton indoors was a really old pool and Mr Levitt taught us swimming there. Boys cubicles were on the ground floor with a green canvas curtain almost on top of the pool. The girls cubicles were upstairs.

Later we went to Picketts Lock with it's small but warm pool.

Knights Lane,
Edmonton



Durnsford Road



Locally was Halliwick Cripples Home, what is now a politically incorrect title, and the annual fete in the grounds was a very popular event. I remember one year a lad drowned in the New River which ran through the grounds. This is long gone and now houses a residential development



Photo History



Cinemas were plentiful locally. Saturday Morning Cinema at The Capitol Winchmore Hill, which then became a tax office and is now a major apartment development.. We queued outside the Capital and our 6d covered cartoon's, a short film plus the regular serial. Before the films we had the 'Birthday Time'. This is where all youngster came on stage in front of the curtain if their birthday was the following week. We all clapped and they got a free entry voucher for the following week.



Capitol, Winchmore Hill

We soon twigged this and we suddenly had frequent birthdays. The push doors at the exits let in many friends...

I can still sing the song...

We are the boys and girls well known as..

Minors of the ABC

And every Saturday we line up

To see the films we like..and shout aloud with glee



Can you imagine that now!!

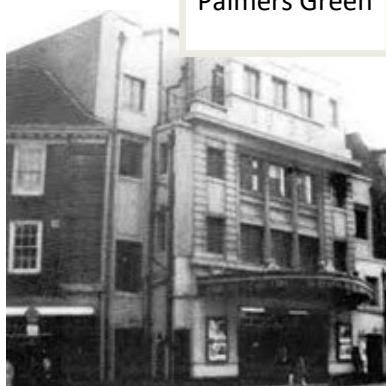


Odeon, Southgate

At Southgate there was the Odeon, in Palmers Green there was the Queens and The Gaumont and at Enfield the Rialto (behind the market square) and the Savoy (now the giant Tesco's) and the 'fleapit' as the Florida was called at the lights opposite Lidle. The Astoria Finsbury Park was a treat with its ornate Arabian scene around the screen and I seem to recall the organ that used to rise up there. This was a great attraction.

There was a whole ritual to 'going to the flicks' . Performances were continuous and one queued at the start time . Usherettes showed you to your seats and there was a black and white 'B' film often a London police story. These were atmospheric and I still love to see old copies of these. Then came Pathe news , a very jingoistic look at the news followed by the 'main feature'. Ice creams were sold by the usherettes at the intervals

Gaumont,
Palmers Green



Queens, Palmers
Green

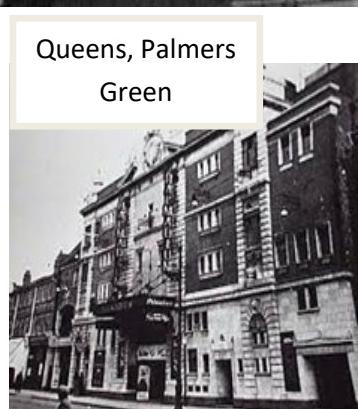


Savoy, Enfield

Rialto, Enfield



Market Place and Rialto, Enfield



Florida, Enfield

Local shops and restaurants were advertised and these were really poor quality general purpose films. Adverts for forthcoming attractions followed and were, by modern standards, really poor.



Photo History



HAIRDRESSERS

Lynn still remembers at her hairdressers a gas thing on the wall to curl your hair and the giant hood over your hair with curlers in to dry it. Very hot and you couldn't hear what the hairdresser was saying (maybe an advantage!)

My hairdresser was Muldoon's in Enfield at the top of the town and it was a busy salon above the ladies one. You sat patiently until it was your turn (Often older folk pushed ahead of you). Straight back and sides...no fancy cuts, then Bay Rum was rubbed in and you went out looking totally shorn.

Sometimes I went to cartoon cinemas in Baker Street or the West End. Mainly time fillers if one had a later meeting

We sometimes got a Red Rover which was a ticket costing 3/6 I think and entitled us to a days bus travel anywhere so we toured London and enjoyed exploring 'like grown ups'



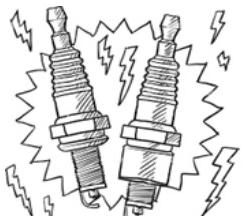
TRAVEL

1962 ...My 1947 Ford Anglia and Dad's Hillman Minx



Our first car was a Black Ford Anglia 1947 which went really well except for starting on wet mornings when Dad was always on standby for a push or tow. Lynn and I actually listened to the weather forecast and if poor weather was forecast we removed the spark plugs...(yes we knew how to do that, and took them into the house to keep warm in the oven). A blanket over the engine completed the protection. We tied string to the steering wheel to remind us to remove it before attempting to start the car.

GWK 446...who doesn't remember the registration of their first car!! Later cars included our pride and joy the pale blue



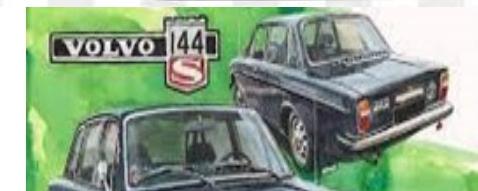
MGB



Rover 2000



BMW 6



Volvo 144



MGB with its tonneau cover, hard top and throaty roar...it passed everything expect Marvin at our local back street garage for which it seemed to have a constant attraction. (costing us a fortune) Rover 2000 and BMW 6 were later additions...then we became more settled and had a succession of Volvos, but that's another story

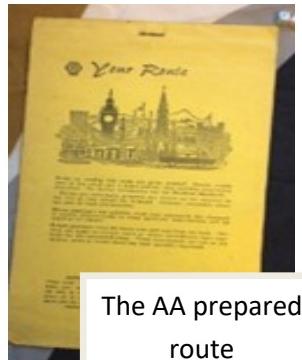
Travel was a luxury and certainly not as we know it now.

Grey Green coaches left from Stamford Hill and afforded a means of touring the country.



Southend, as the nearest coastal resort to London, was a treat and when Dad drove there it was always a slow and horrible journey. The road was two lanes and sometimes three lanes allowing overtaking but it was dangerous . Obviously speeds were slower and more of a free for all. Parking restrictions were still to come as were motorways. Seems hard to realise that our first proper motorway was the M1 in 1958 (when I was 14)

When we went abroad, it was a total experience and the AA had prepared a route which one then turned round to return home. It was pretty hopeless. Car travel abroad was so rare that at Dover we drove along the quay over railway lines and onto a hoist which lifted the car into the hold.



I also remember driving up a ramp onto the front of an aircraft at Southend airport once. There were already Autobahns in Germany and Dad excitedly explained about lane discipline.

August 1958





Photo History



Eating out was really reserved for special occasions and we frequented the same 'favourites' for years. The Viking in Church Street Edmonton , Schmidt's in Charlotte Street, The Dorice in Swiss Cottage, Spaghetti House in Leicester Square. Cafe Anjou in Palmers Green.



Pubs were not really our family scene and a slow transformation was taking place. Pubs had dominated every locality and many were still back street locals where it went quiet if strangers dared to enter. Mainly, but not exclusively a male preserve, and I remember when I ran pubs, regulars still had their own tankards behind the bar. No food was available other than maybe Smiths crisps with the blue twist of salt. The unsuitable bags were often stale and the contents not crispy. Sometimes the delight of a pickled egg was on offer. No bistro



pubs, no flashing fruit machines, no music and but course a dart board and sometimes a snooker table or bar billiards which we enjoyed. One of my jobs was devising menus for the many pubs under the catering control of Pioneer Catering and it was like swimming against the tide. Many of the more traditional pubs resisted any change and food change was the very pits in their eyes. Look at pub food now!! A real improvement but in the change I now realise we have lost for ever the unique social attributes of English pub life, never to be seen again. Despite the nicotine-stained ceilings and bolshy landladies this was, for many, a home from home and coffee bars and wine bars will never replace that.

Amusements is obviously where may of us have seen vast changes and old folk like us really feel that the youngsters total obsession with their phones, their laptops etc is a really retrograde step. Two days ago Lynn and I stopped for a coffee (yes overpriced and in a paper cup) and as we sat down in the back room we suddenly aware that every table was occupied by a lone girl or woman all avidly concentrating on their laptops. Every table had a empty water or coffee cup on it and some laptops were plugged in below . With heating bills having escalated, will this become the norm...working away from a cold room at home and using someone else's' electricity? More disturbingly is the unsocial nature of their existence. Every tube journey we take, each row opposite has a bank of people everyone without exception is looking avidly at their phones, many rushing off as if they have nearly missed their stop.



PHONES: At home we had no phone for a long while , then a party line where you had to check that a neighbour wasn't deep in conversation. Mostly, we used one of the banks of four phone boxes on the parade inserting four pennies and pressing button 'A' to connect. (Button 'B' to get the money back) Phone numbers were preceded with a local name (ours was Laburnum) Our first mobiles were heavy and large (known as 'house bricks' with an extendable aerial. Only capable of sending and receiving calls (if you were in a 'good reception' area. Our phones are now 'smart phones' -mini computers with internet access and every kid has one despite their large retail cost. Also the added problem is now kids have access to anything and the innocence of childhood is quickly eroded. This is an area where we see evidence of such major changes.

It is youngsters that worry us most. No more 'playing out' no more climbing trees...Upstairs in numerous bedrooms young people are tuning in to blogs, podcasts, films and other more dubious media...Spectating rather than participating is now the norm and parents are losing control. So many distractions and so much competing for their attention.

We have seen so many examples of when young people get involved in 'doing something' they get a real sense of achievement and delight. We are not happy with what is happening and every walk of life is now making use of Google and other major organisation. We are giving power to such giants that they will soon be uncontrolled. ...and uncontrollable



There is now seemingly, a major divide between the tech-wise and the technophobes. This is not always an age thing. Many of our friends possibly because of a deep fear of the new, flatly refuse to endorse tech changes and I see this a lot with our friends and family too.



Larnie is totally tech savvy and speedily sends messages whilst holding a conversation.. Lynn and Tammy are both trying to adopt many of the newer tech offerings, but sometimes can be heard shouting in exasperation at the inanimate IT cause of their frustrations.





Photo History



Video recorder with video cassette



Yes, we are now in the era of having to accept so called 'improvements' but in reality they are often changes for changes sake. I remember a long while back trying in vain to get a video recorder (you can see how long ago that must have been). When I asked the IT assistant in John Lewis for a basic model as I found the technology of the new machines baffled me. She replied "everyone is asking for that, but I'm afraid there are only these ..no basic models are made any more. The assistant totally agreed with my point "all the extra features were never used."

The same with my new car. The handbook is a major tome and in reality many features are totally irrelevant.

Cashless society is rapidly becoming the norm and covid speeded up the use of card payment and when w saw a tube busker with a notice "tap here for minimum £2.00 payment" ...this was the ultimate. One wonders how window cleaners, hairdresser tips etc will be paid if cash is no longer in use but I guess that is a small argument against a total changeover.

I recently witnessed someone with a large bank balance being refused a credit card as they had was no visible credit history and no visible regular income. No discretion could be used. It was a flat refusal.



Everyone we know have a major grouse..and this is it: Try contacting anyone in the event of a problem. That irritating mantra" we apologise for keeping you waiting, your business is important to us...followed by that constant nauseating music and eventually a recorded voice informing you that you are number twelve in the queue. You then decide to bite the bullet and wait After an interminable duration, the music stops...Total silence. Am I about to speak to a human?? No...a voice then announces you are number twelve in the queue. How can number thirteen be allowed to speak for so long when we are all patiently waiting.? Then after a mind-numbing wait you eventually succeed in getting through. Calmly resisting the temptation to fly off the handle because' in fairness' it is not the persons fault, you calmly explain the reason for your call. They respond but you can not understand one word when you suddenly realise that it is not a foreign language, it is just a really difficult to understand accent and worst of all they are reading from a script. Frustratingly it slowly dawns on you that you will never have the satisfaction of a sensible conclusion to your problem. At this point most of us give up the will to live. But wait..the final remark tops it all..."We hope we have been able to assist you, is there anything else we can help you with"...

I will not state the obvious.

This is maybe comical until one spends a whole day waiting for an engineer/ delivery etc and then no way of complaining. Yes this is relevant to my discussion about modern life. With the vast increases in our technical abilities we have forgotten the human element. People need to relate to people. FAQ 's are not the answer. Chat bots are not the answer. Emails with the auto response " We endeavour to respond to all emails within 24 hours (if you're lucky) are not the answer. Vast profits are being made so surely people can be given the jobs of answering phones and having the authority to 'sort out' the issues.



Amusements are an area where obviously many of us have seen vast changes and old folk like us really feel that the youngsters total obsession with their phones, their laptops etc is a really retrograde step. Two days ago Lynn and I stopped for a coffee (yes overpriced and in a paper cup) and as we sat down in the back room we suddenly aware that every table was occupied by a lone girl or woman all avidly concentrating on their laptops. Every table had a empty water or coffee cup on it and some laptops were plugged in below . With heating bills having escalated will this become the norm...working away from a cold room and using someone else's' electricity?

More disturbingly is the unsocial nature of their existence. Every tube journey we take, each row opposite has a bank of people , and without exception, everyone is looking avidly at their phones, many rushing off they have nearly miss their stop.



It is youngsters that worry us most. No more 'playing out' no more climbing trees...

Will this picture soon be just an image of a forgotten era??!!



Photo History

Upstairs in numerous bedrooms young people are tuning in to blogs, podcasts, films and other more dubious media. Spectators rather than participants is now the norm and parents are losing control. So many distractions and so much competing for their attention. We have seen so many examples of where young people get involved in 'doing something' they get a real sense of achievement and delight. We are not happy with what is happening and every walk of life is now making use of Google and other major organisation. We are giving power to such giants that they will soon be uncontrolled. ...and uncontrollable

As you can see by these Photo History volumes, I love collating and displaying my photos with my comments and notes. When I show them to folk, invariably I get the same retort. You know I have got thousands of photos on my phone and I really must try to sort them out. The times I have been with friends and someone shows me a photo of ,say, a grandchild, and then the other person can be seen flicking thorough a multitude of photos in exasperation never finding the little darlings cute shot.

This is rapidly becoming reality. We have so much information at our fingertips that we do not absorb things any more "I'll Google it" is the usual solution and I am guilty of this too. But I wonder if that persons name, that river in Peru, that old comedy tv show title is retained. Lecturers in universities are becoming adept at sifting out 'cut and paste' in their students'

dissertations. Yes, I just checked the spelling of 'dissertations' and my phone also showed me a note presumably taken from a previous search "*as you looked up Italy, you might be interested in*****"

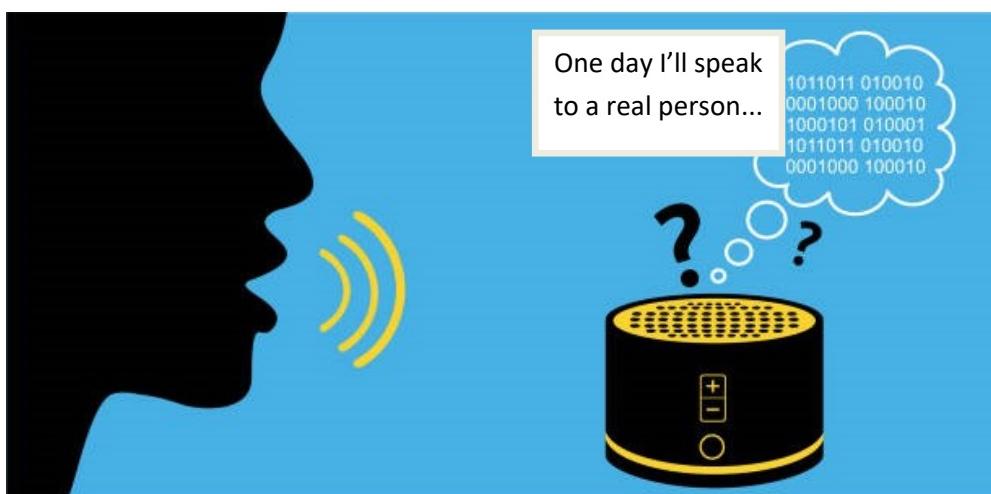




Photo History



Larnie came straight from work and we met her outside, wolfed down pizza in the car and raced in just as the curtain rose



Larnie joined us once again for our regular Xmas treat—
Mathew Bourne Sleeping





Photo History



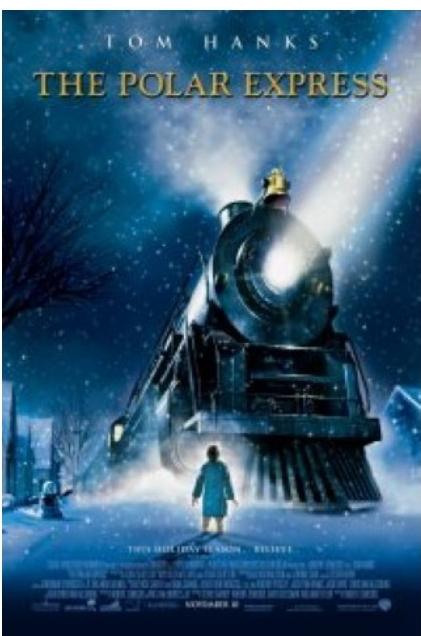
Just before Christmas Tammy booked us in to see a magical performance of our favourite, Polar Express

This was the Station Masters door



The cinema was beautifully decorated in three marquees which were approached via an illuminated mirrored area and a magical forest

Sitting in the mock train, we approached the North pole at great speed



The sofa seats were so comfortable we had a job leaving when the film ended



Photo History



The warm autumn changed abruptly and a heavy frost was followed by snow

Walking around Forty Hall was really cold but the spiders webs and leaves edged with ice crystals gave me some magic shots





Photo History





Photo History





Photo History





Photo History





Photo History





Photo History





Photo History





Photo History





Photo History





Photo History

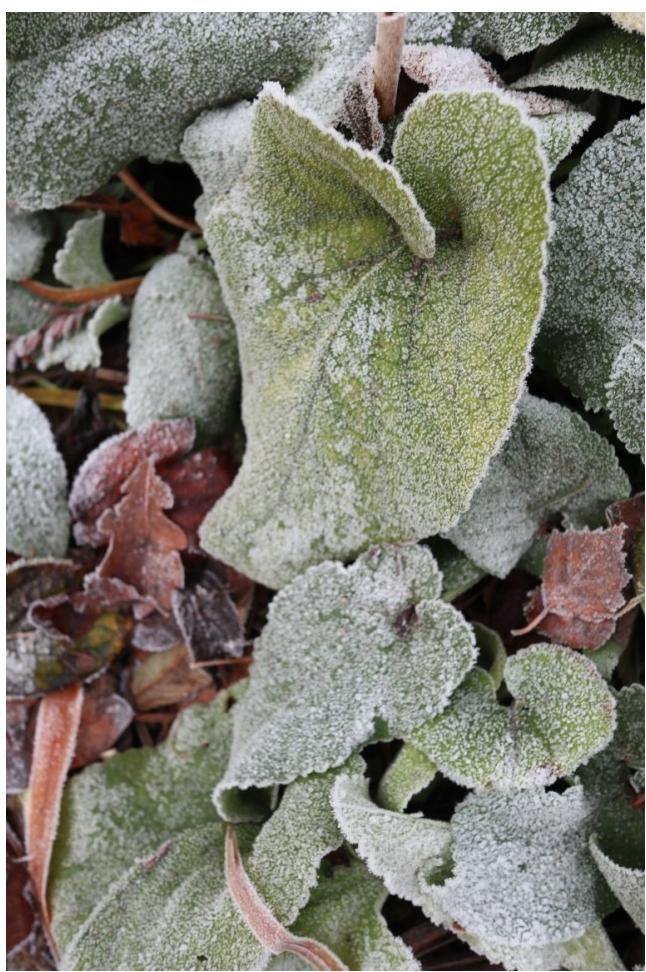




Photo History



Santa!!





Photo History





Photo History





Photo History





Photo History





Photo History





Photo History





Photo History



Apologies for all these photos of icy, frosty views but they seemed so special that I took hundreds (198 actually) and managed, with difficulty, to reduce them all to the ones printed on the previous pages.





Photo History



Notes at end of 2022

Thoughts from one confused guy.

It is possible by writing my thoughts that it will become increasingly obvious that maybe, just maybe, it's not me that's confused, it the whole of the crazy world around us and how we are conditioned to accept it as 'normal.'

You can disregard this whole two page section but if my flicking fly has attracted you to dart out from that hidden pool and snap at the yourself well and truly hooked. At the end of my rambling you can wrigden depths but maybe you will retain some of my questioning and if so



entered the water near you and bait...well, dear friend, Consider ggle free and dart back into the hid- my fishing trip was worthwhile.

Anyway, on with my deep, deep questioning.

Is the world on a path leading to inevitable self destruction?

A so called 'civilised' country like Russia invades another civilised neighbouring country . Total barbarity and the rest of the world looks on helplessly. Yes, I am aware of all the political implications of 'getting involved' but is this reality. Families cowering in shelters with no food, water or electricity and we carry on checking our tv times for the inevitable re-runs of old shows.

We were used to news on the hour and in morning and evening papers. Now, breaking news is immediate and as a result, we are becoming desensitised by the very volume of news available. Information is not stored in our withering brains. We just 'Google' for an answer and we don't even retain that answer.

Under the guise of making life easier for everyone, we are lulled into accepting help in every form. Are we actually incapable of changing the channels on our tv. Is the remote really so necessary. Do you, like us , totally never use half of the buttons on the remote. Even whilst typing this , I am being reminded of misspellings and letter omissions. Our every move is noted, not for our personal good but collectively this information is so valuable. Knowledge is power but we should really question are the owners of this power the sort of people/organisations that we trust with power. I have seen numerous examples of how the whole concept is so big that, like trying to stop a super tanker, it takes a dangerously long time. Examples are easy to see. Young and old people being encouraged to take their own lives on line. How sick is that. But the social media allowing these perpetrators of evil are not immediately stopped and punished. They hide away, possibly in their parents house in a seemingly normal environment. My main point is not to show the sick hidden society, but heaven knows it seems sicker than ever. It is that these IT giants have the technology to prevent this totally unacceptable situation immediately but they choose not to

They are, in effect, too large and powerful for anyone to effectively go against them. However everyone, every organisation, has its Achilles heel so we should use that wedge to prevent continued unacceptable situations.

But, and this is my main point, we all are basically good folk but we are apathetic. We are so used to being told what is good for us we actually believe these dictates. I see, on a local level, some really stupid legislation regarding closing roads to , in their words, prevent pollution etc. This is so obviously wrong and despite common sense and masses of protests the road closures are now enshrined in law and the pollution , traffic jams and inconvenience are now almost accepted. Yes, we get people moaning , but this is ineffective. The original dictates emanated from our representatives, our councillors, our elected body of people. They are unapproachable and many have a hidden agenda.

Our government is a massive body of people who , again, like the super tanker example I used earlier, are on a collision course for total meltdown. They don't represent me, they don't represent the majority of the population. The controllers of power really live in a parallel universe. They are wealthy, they often live adjacent to , but not in the same environment as their electorate. How can they possibly represent a lifestyle they have never experienced. The financial divide now is so vast that it is like a slowly ticking time bomb. With the cost of living increase now so high, and ordinary folk not being able to pay fuel bills, feed their families and pay their mortgages . These are not layabout, social security scroungers , these are normal hard working people. If train staff, nurses, doctors, post workers, ambulance drivers are striking for a living wage and this is ignored by our government surely this heralds anarchy. Not rebellion from outsiders with many hidden agendas, but from our own work force. If you pay peanuts you get monkeys. Where are all our hospitality staff, doctors etc? They have left our country. We are now seeing the highest inflation rate increase for along time, but from statistics available , we are nowhere near the worst. This surprises me.. The EU is imposing a windfall tax on power companies and this will be spread amongst member countries. Our government has refused to do this. Why? Surely this is so typical of the massive differential between people. Vast salaries and pensions to many and others queuing at food banks. Forget politics, many problems can be solved immediately by a firm hand. Where companies perform badly, why should directors still take massive dividends? OK so we upset some powerful people, the



Photo History



trouble is that most of these people are already financially secure , maybe even with vested interests. If one does a bad job get rid of them and ensure they do not benefit.

I feel very strongly about pollution in our waterways and just today targets to clean up the majority of England's rivers, lakes and coastal waters suffering from a cocktail of agricultural and sewage pollution have been pushed back from 2027 to 2063.

This is shameful. The latest state of rivers and lakes released by the Environment Agency in 2020 shows that only 16% met the criteria for good ecological status and no surface water bodies are deemed to meet the criteria for achieving good chemical status. Both criteria are required for a waterway to be deemed as in a good state - thus no river, lake or coastal water is judged to be in a good state at present. I wont be around by the time the 'so-called' clean up is now scheduled to be reached. This is laughable if it wasn't so serious. I now actively discourage my family from wild swimming and even sea swimming is dangerous. Surfers and anyone with the slightest interest in wild life and water habitat is aware of the sewage discharges into our rivers and seas. So much is spoken about this, yet, there are an infinite number of illegal spillages and even when the companies are named and fined, it is blatantly obvious that the vast profits being made make this deterrent. Fines obviously considered a business expense. I would like to see the CEO's of all the polluting companies personally to be held liable and personally fined and prosecuted. The buck must stop there.

In October 2021, a proposal from the Lords to the Environment Bill that would have placed legal duties on the companies to reduce discharges was defeated by 265 MPs' votes to 202.

The thinking behind this is that the sewage system is Victorian and to update it would put such a massive charge on them which is feared would be passed back to the public. Money shouting loudly again...

No other country in the world has adopted the English system of private companies owning and running regional water and sanitation systems," the University of Greenwich reported.

"The overwhelming majority of the world – including the USA – runs water and sanitation services through the public sector. These massive profits go back to France (which incidentally has the lowest rise in the cost of living. Coincidence?. I think not. Our electricity provided by EDF is 84% French owned.

This made me check some other 'hidden' ownerships.

WATER:

A 27% shareholder in Thames Water is owned by Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement . The only UK organisations holding shareholdings are the BT Pension Scheme and Universities Superannuation Scheme holding combined shareholdings of 20%. Even the Government of Abu Dhabi and The Government of Kuwait own a combined total of 19%.

This does not happen in any other country. Yes, it made a lot of money from the initial sale but now the public are financing

other countries and our country watches on in nodding compliance...

Highest paid director	Company	Total pay 2017/18 (£000s)	ELECTRICITY
Scott Longhurst	Anglian Water	1,921	Yes, and these are old figures...Wow!
Liv Garfield	Severn Trent	2,084	
Ian Mcauley	Southern Water	1,066	
Steve Mogford	United Utilities	2,075	

THE UK'S 2ND BIGGEST ENERGY SUPPLIER: E.ON

E.ON is the UK's 2nd biggest energy supplier, with 7.7 million gas & electricity customers. It's owned by one of the biggest suppliers in Europe, German-based company E.ON SE.

LOBBYING AGAINST PRICE CAPS

This summer E.ON lobbied against a "punitive" energy price cap. E.ON also raised concerns over a potential loss of £45 million due to the Don't Pay campaign.

AGE UK + E.ON: A "SPECIAL" RELATIONSHIP

In 2016 Age UK & E.ON were investigated by the Charity Commission and Ofgem after offering a "special" tariff for the elderly that cost customers £245 more than other E.ON tariffs. Age UK was set to earn £41 from each customer on the tariff, while E.ON stood to make an extra £37m each year.

2021 BOSSES' PAY:

CEO	2021 Pay (£)
Leonhard Birnbaum, CEO of E.ON Group	£4.5m
E.ON CEO, Michael Lewis	£1m

SOCK STUNT

In January E.ON was forced to apologise after sending 30,000 customers a pair of socks with the message to keep the "heating down, CO2 down".

I don't want to get bogged down in specifics. I just feel that as individuals, we are now seen and treated like 'cannon fodder' and cash cows and I am not happy with the way the world is heading. I will end where I started. Everyone has an Achilles heel and sometimes this is where we, as individuals, can make our voices heard.

Do not accept things that effect our lives with resignation. Be like me, a grumpy old man and make your viewpoint heard.



Well, I guess my alternative to seeing a shrink is giving vent to my thoughts and feelings here, so gosh...I feel so much better for my 'written' rant...and now on with my Photo History

Tammy and Larnie are off to Germany for a few days over Xmas so they came to us for an early Xmas lunch and we had such a laugh together. They are an exceptional duo.



It's bag comparison time folks

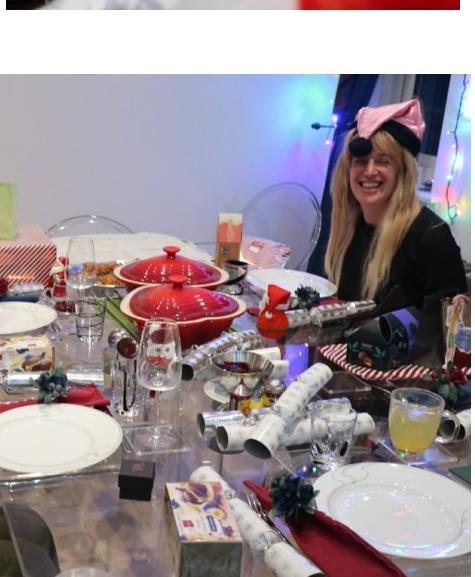




Photo History



Christmas

2022





Photo History



...and a 'behind the scenes' shot





The River called Life #1 (December '22)

No current stronger than the one propelling me forward

Resistance is futile, total compliance is expected

Unable to see any surrounding exits

The choice to be controlled is obviously not mine

Where is the source of this vortex

What magnetic power attracts this flow

Seething and unseeing as if in a zombie state

No visible or audible calls are heard

The masses meet conveyed from different directions

But, as if by instinct, intermingling is predetermined

Through vast halls the mass now snakes

Funnelled into lines of compliant silence

Suddenly they drop in controlled formation

Down, down, what awaits these willing victims.

This time groups are forming but rarely a word is heard

Airless and warm this alien world is waiting. Just waiting

Suddenly a ghostly roar is heard but no signs of fear are visible

Movement is evident as if choreographed

Groups move forward intersected by others crossing their paths

Have I entered a world so alien to normality

Where groups now sit or stand, where silence is deafening

This silence is compounded by a background roar

No signs of fear, acceptance seems inevitable

Small screens are viewed by seemingly sightless souls

Sadly this daily hell is just my journey home

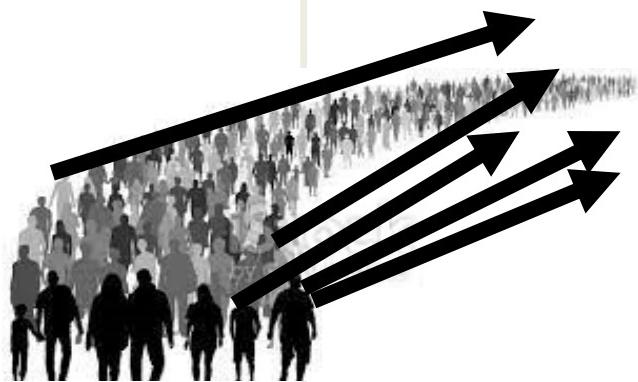




Photo History



The River called Life #2 (December '22)

Meandering, rippling, through quiet fields

Gentle gurgling over the stony bottom.

Dark pools of mystery seemingly bottomless hiding who knows what

Trees bend as if in supplication

Crowns almost entering the water

Exposed roots snake out steadyng ancient trunks

Coloured clumps of water plants alive with insects

Walking alongside deep in solitary contemplation

No one can remove indelible memories like this

The turbulence of life can detract from these peaceful moments but even

The stranglehold of sadness is unable to stifle the very breath of these encounters

Round the bend new vistas open to delight

No painting or photograph able to compete

No written masterpieces of literature or poems with others words

Can approach that unspoken bond of man with nature.

That which places man on a higher plane than animals

The joy of being able to relax but not demand any form of satisfaction.

The sheer ability to feel at one with nature, to delight in summer scents, summer sounds.

Transcending class and status, this delight in nature's gifts

Is there for all to take but many are too blinkered to see the offering.

It is to them that I reach out and hope that in the knowledge that time is irrelevant

That this bountiful gift is always there for those able to see beyond the obvious

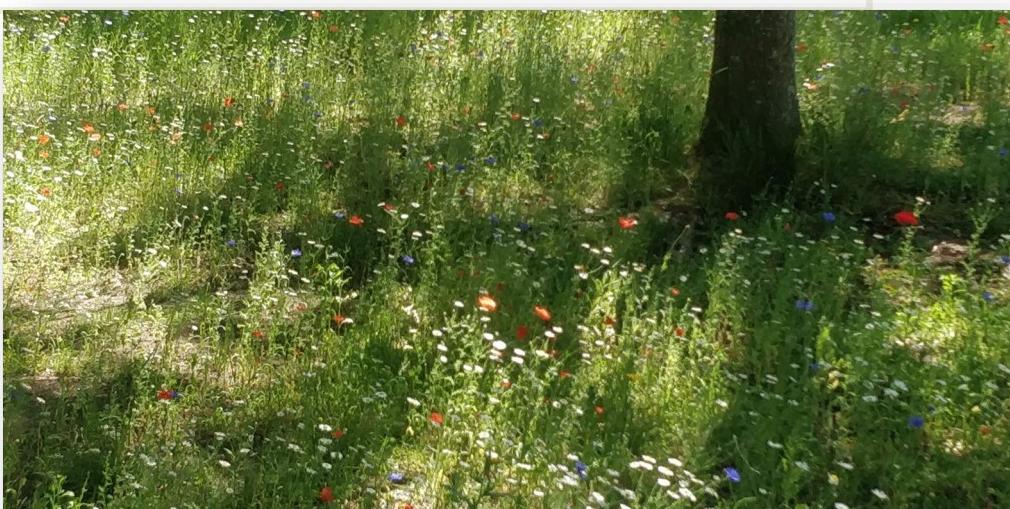




Photo History



The River called Life #3(December '22)

Graffiti on every surface and obscenities scrawled on benches
 Waste bins overflowing with the detritus of modern living
 Foul smelling, never emptied, red bins with dogs excrement
 The river water slow moving with an oily film
 The path potholed with muddy tyre marks
 A shout announces that antisocial speeding cyclist
 Wrapped up in his personal cloak of problems
 Cooking and frying smells leak from adjacent houses
 As though they have the right to assail our senses.
 We have ventured here to escape the city.
 To walk the towpath, to enjoy nature.
 But, as if the river has reduced itself to those low levels we have imposed on ourselves
 It is there as a constant reminder that with a little effort we should do better.
 Deluding ourselves we hasten towards the bend
 As if this watery sadness will transform itself by some hidden magic into an oasis
 No, here it is even sadder, with supermarket trolleys competing with burnt-out bikes.
 Attempting unsuccessfully to hide in the depths
 Foul-smelling liquid running slowly from pipes below both factories and homes.
 Even the ducks avoiding the slowly spreading coloured outfall.
 But, as we walk the city becomes more distant and fields replace the housing
 Now there are trees and hedges along the banks
 People pass and greetings are exchanged
 It is as if the river is fighting back
 Birds fly overhead and nests are in the trees.
 The river now has a noticeable current and one can even see the bottom
 Is it possible that man being so lazy, in not walking this far



Has allowed the river to win the fight and regain its dignity





Photo History



IT'S OVER...ONCE AGAIN

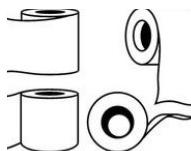
How do the decorations get so totally twisted up. They were carefully packed last year but it's those lights that seem to have spent a year hiding in the top of the cupboard intent on twisting themselves into tiny knots.



The menu is planned meticulously but, as always, last minute allergies and dislikes have been subtly mentioned followed by 'but please don't make anything specially for us' . What, and be bad mouthed for the whole year



Will the girlfriend be staying over and if that's the case do we put them in the same room?



Extra toilet paper, towels, soap and enough food for an army are carefully bought in advance so why, oh why, do we always run out of soft drinks, milk and batteries.

That careful list of Xmas cards is again the victim of omission. How could we forget them??

Peeled, marinaded, foil covered, decorations beautifully displayed, table laid and crackers distributed and even the cheese and red wine left out 'to breath'



So why couldn't they have left earlier. Everyone knew the traffic would be heavy and the timing is now totally messed up.



Air kisses and silly hats. Coats removed and even sillier jumpers revealed. Strange boxes all beautifully wrapped are revealed...Oh you shouldn't...

Even more scented candles, relishes with unlikely ingredient combinations, socks that no sane person would select and those ornaments that will speedily be delegated to upstairs cupboards.

Does anybody actually enjoy those gold foil wrapped sweets where the plastic box costs much more than those terrible contents ..why do we do it.



Next year we'll definitely politely explain that we're going away..but in reality once the travel hassles unfold, once strikes and cost are factored in a quiet festive season is reconsidered.

Who to invite. Those family folk that never reciprocate...but overstay their welcome, contribute nothing to the festive fare but seem to eat the largest portions. That welcome lonely person who , but for us, would spend time alone.

It's over.



Photo History



Will our lovely home ever recover. I know it's my kitchen, my domain and yes, I religiously prevented anyone coming in. However those piles of washing up and those blooming great pans that don't fit in the dishwasher are really beasts.



When they're all gone, I'm going to put my feet up and gorge on cold turkey and those expensive liqueur chocolates we managed to hide

Now, beds to strip and all those forgotten socks, weird tee shirts and toothpaste are bagged to be reunited with their owners.



The cracker contents and unworn silly hats join the contents of the black sack by the front door, torn wrapping paper that was on pristine rolls so few days ago crammed in with haste.

Hoover out and those strange stains seem to have come off the carpet successfully.



Wow..TV on, feet up, cushion behind my head.

Plate of turkey and that cranberry sauce and joy of joy, even managed to find some pigs in blankets .

Yes, that mulled wine will go down a treat.

Why do we do it.. expensive, totally exhausting, so much planning and so much work all for such a short duration???.

I think this is an action replay



Hi darling...there are emails thanking us for the best time ever..and the phone hasn't stopped saying what a brilliant time everyone had had.

Same time next year!!.. definitely!



Photo History

DP, Peachy and Beau spent a few days with us at Xmas and it was very laid back



Growing
up so
quickly

Wrapping
paper,
laughs,
and great
fun





~ History



Christmas day fun n the park gym





Photo History



Jo is now living in Cyprus so Mark joined us for a Forty hall walk then Christmas lunch at home





Photo History



December '22





Photo History



Roy, a friend at swimming made me this wonderful Chanukah card. It must have taken him ages. The inside is on the next page



"Ralph is fish"

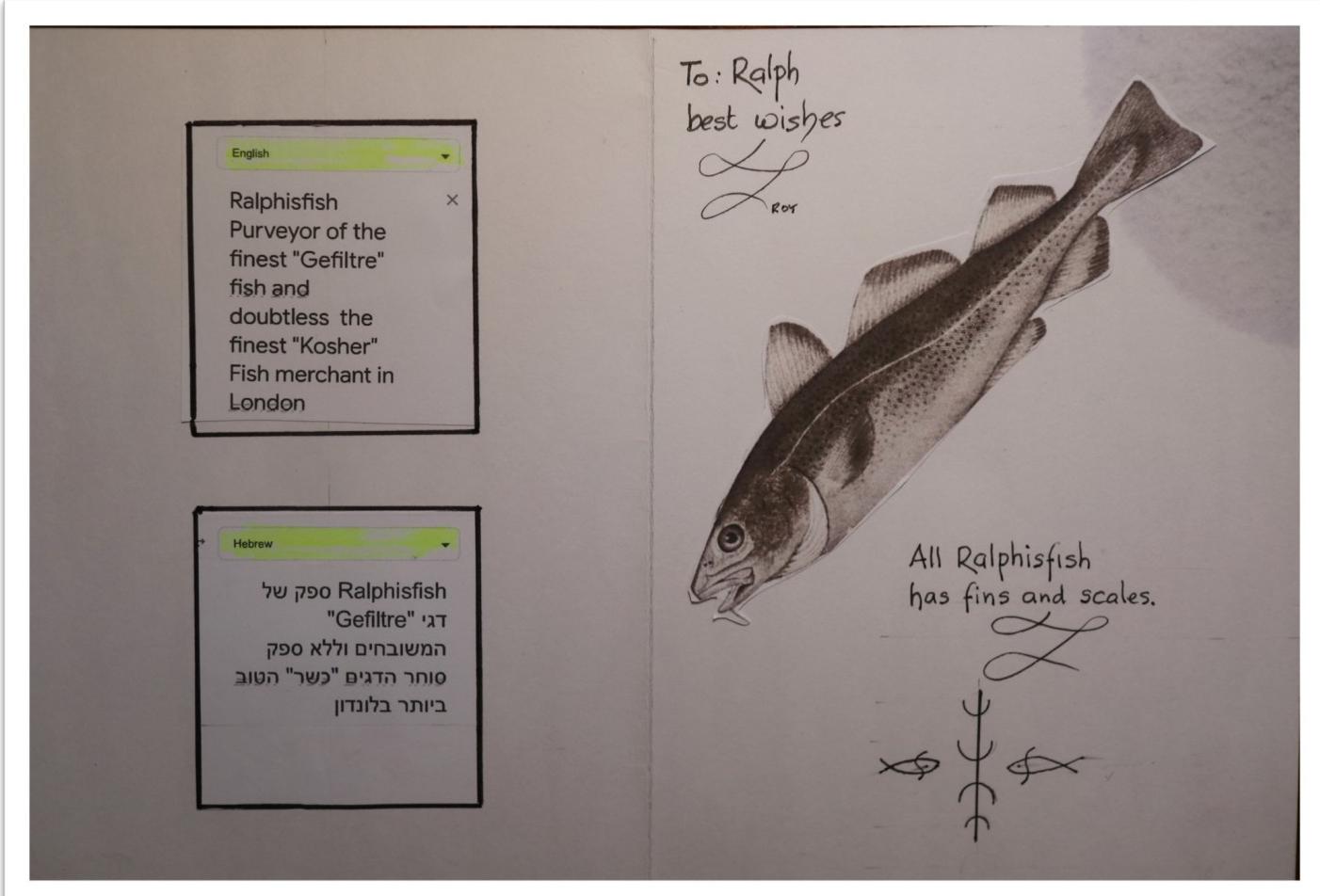
Go "On line" and "Trawl the Net"
for Ralph's finest fish



Photo History



The inside of the card....wonderful and so thoughtful.



This delightful little chef and blackboard was hand made by Cliff for Lynn and myself. Again, a really thoughtful gift that must have taken an age to make





Photo History



A rainy, windy walk on Enfield Chase Path showing DP some of our tree planting areas.





Photo History





Despite all our work trying to put something back into society one always seems to encounter mindless antisocial behaviour. Here is a heavy resting stool thrown into the pond. Previously it was a seat that took several of us to drag out. Also, tree supports were recently taken from their positions and used to fuel a fire.

.....Unbelievable.

DP says they are bored...and lack any ambition as they can not see any future.

I can only equate it with previous generations with an equal (or maybe even more) reason to despair and actually, despite all odds stacked against them, had the pluck to drag themselves out of their helpless situation and carve a life for themselves and their families. I don't remember society saying they need understanding and sympathy. Everyone was struggling and no-one had time to feel sorry for themselves and destroy their environment

Sorry, I think there is too much misdirected sympathy and attempted understanding but let's agree to differ...

I was going to say this ,possibly, is not the place to vent my feelings but, sod it, yes, this is exactly the place to vent my feelings and I can never accept vandalism and antisocial behaviour. Let them understand me...I will never understand them...sorry , but that's how I feel





Photo History



Ok, despite my rant, I am going to end 2022 on a positive note. Here is my wonderful son and fantastic wife walking with me on a blustery day on The Enfield Chase. Surrounding us are new areas already establishing as future woodlands. The empty cells and scrapes and gullies are filling with water and there are birds and one can sense that things are happening here. Despite the economic climate and doom and gloom prophesised , I feel very positive. Roll on 2023

